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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KIRKUK 000142

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SUBJECT: (C) KRG PROVIDING WATER TO 450-PLUS VILLAGES IN KIRKUK; POOR SECURITY HINDERS WATER RECONSTRUCTION

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CLASSIFIED BY: Jim Bigus, PRT Leader, POL, Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: Kirkuk Provincial Council (KPC) Minister of Water, Abdul Qadir, told IPAO on July 31 the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has been supplying well water to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), mostly Kurds, in more than 450 villages on the periphery of Kirkuk city and its vicinity. He said that deteriorating security in Kirkuk had limited water reconstruction to assisting the city's residents alone and that the KPC currently was not considering proposals for the broader Kirkuk Province. Due to the security situation, reconstruction had concentrated on three large projects designed to have the maximum impact for the city (Ref. para. 10-12). Water degraded severely before reaching the consumer due to poor water pressure, cracked pipes, and unauthorized tapping. The Water Ministry expected to finish the three large projects by the end of 2007, and estimated these would meet population demand for the city through 2013. KRG support for IDP settlements could be part of a move to make these permanent, possibly in preparation for re-drawing the municipal boundaries prior to the referendum on Kirkuk's final status. END
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

(C) KRG PROVIDING WATER TO 450-PLUS VILLAGES

¶2. (C) KPC Minister of Water, Abdul Muhammad Qadir, told IPAO on July 31 that only 7 of the more than 450 villages surrounding Kirkuk city received water from the main K-1 water treatment pipe into the city. He claimed the KRG was providing water services to the IDP settlements and many of the remaining villages surrounding Kirkuk city by drilling artesian wells in areas that did not connect to the city's water network. Qadir said the KDP and PUK were actively encouraging NGOs to build water projects and that many of these were located in areas with large IDP settlements, such as Rahamiyah and Failaq. Qadir claimed this was good since the construction of new settlements in these areas would not have an impact on water consumption in the city itself.

(C) POOR SECURITY HINDERS WATER RECONSTRUCTION

¶3. (C) Qadir said poor security remained the primary obstacle to resolving Kirkuk's water problems. He said terrorists recently attacked the K-1 water network into Kirkuk city and suggested clearly labeling the new pipes "water" would help, since the captured suspects confessed they thought they had

bombed oil pipelines. Qadir said the terrorists chose to attack the K-1 pipeline for its remote location, its association with Coalition or Coalition-funded contractors, and out of concern that tribal shaykhs would react negatively to any attacks on local water reconstruction efforts in the Hewija and Zab sub-districts of Kirkuk Province. Qadir claimed Coalition efforts to secure water projects in the southern village of Tel Dhahab, in Zab, were due to its reputation as a center for terrorism, and added that terrorists had used isolated, remote water buildings through 2005 as strongholds to orchestrate attacks but that this threat had been eliminated. He said that fighting between Arabs and Turkoman had halted reconstruction efforts in the Taza sub-district of Daquq, in southeast Kirkuk Province, because Turkoman workers were not being allowed access to the site.

(C) WATER DEGRADATION WIDE-SPREAD, SERVICE IS NOT

¶4. (C) Qadir said water arriving from K-1 to the pumping stations on the city's outskirts was potable, but suffered degradation as it moved south due to cracked pipes, poor water pressure, power outages, and unsupervised tapping. Qadir said according to Water Ministry estimates, about 40 percent of Kirkuk city residents were without water, and those who had water received service for only two or three hours, usually every other day. Residents typically ran their water continuously in these hours of service, he said, to fill rooftop storage tanks that provided families with water during shut-off times.

(C) FURTHER DEGRADATION TO SOUTHERN ARAB QUARTERS

¶9. (C) The former regime built K-1 prior to settlement of the southern, mostly Arab areas of Kirkuk, according to Qadir, and this system was only intended to send water to the city zones north of these areas. The pipes connecting the northern zones

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to the pump stations on the city's outskirts were in need of repair, Qadir said, and already degraded the water before it reached consumers in the northern and central parts of the city.

The water suffered further degradation as it moved south, he said, because the southern areas were using small, temporary pipes to tap into the main water pipes of the other city zones to meet local demand. The Water Ministry authorized some taps, he said, but "too many" pipes were connected on the instruction and approval of local community leaders with no oversight from the Water Ministry. Qadir said these levels of water degradation had given rise to the prevailing sentiment that the Kurds living in the northern parts of the city were deliberately siphoning off the potable water for themselves before it reached the Arabs in the southern quarters.

(SBU) NOTES ON THE THREE MAIN WATER RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

¶10. (SBU) K-1 water treatment project (MRGS Coordinates ME 3642-2856): located northwest of the city of Kirkuk. Originally build under Saddam's regime, it was refurbished between February, 2004, and September, 2005, with 4.1 million USD from USAID and is currently managed mostly by Coalition and contractor workers. (Note: all MRGS Coordinates are from the 38S Map Series. End note.)

¶11. (SBU) Dibis water station: an intermediate pump station currently under construction at a cost of approximately 9 million USD and with an estimated pump capacity of 28 million gallons per day, helping the northern villages between Dibis and Kirkuk. Qadir said the Dibis pump station would solve shortages throughout Kirkuk city, which currently operated with several decentralized pumps operating at about 50 percent capacity.

¶12. (SBU) GST-5 Project (MRGS Coordinates ME 2350-5830): currently under construction designed to pump water to the

southern, Arab quarters of the city. A proposed landfill (MRGS ME 4288-0686) is expected to help alleviate the city's sewage and drainage problems.

(C) BIOGRAPHHIC NOTES

¶13. (C) Abdul Qadir Muhammad Amin: Sunni Kurd; born in Kirkuk; politically independent but has affiliations with the Kurdistan Democratic Party; reportedly had strong and ongoing relations with the Coalition Forces and local NGOs, especially their engineering departments; received a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Civil Engineering from Sulaymaniyah University; has worked for the Water Department since 1986.

(U) COMMENT

¶14. (C) In a separate meeting, the director of a local NGO who has been working on water reconstruction in the Kirkuk area since 2003 corroborated Qadir's claims regarding past and current water project statistics and estimates, as well as security obstacles to water reconstruction and evident KRG support to IDP settlements and northern villages. It was noted further that the KRG, specifically the PUK, had not limited its assistance to providing well water, but had made more permanent contributions to the IDP settlements, such as building roads and sewers. The KRG contributions could be part of a larger plan to re-draw the city's municipal boundaries to include the new Kurdish settlements prior to the referendum on Kirkuk's final status. Qadir's statements correlate with other KPC directors, who claim poor security is forcing them to focus on northern, Kurdish areas by default.

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